



Forest Stewardship Council®



Approval of Forest Stewardship Standards addendum - Criteria to determine low complexity National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS)

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The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization established to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC's vision is that the true value of forests is recognized and fully incorporated into society worldwide. FSC is the leading catalyst and defining force for improved forest management and market transformation, shifting the global forest trend toward sustainable use, conservation, restoration, and respect for all.

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A Objective

This objective of this addendum is to provide the criteria for implementing the Board decision at its 82nd meeting in November 2019 to delegate the approval of low complex National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS) to the Policy Steering Group (PSG)

B Scope

The process included in this document shall be followed by staff of the FSC Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) working on the assessment of National Forests Stewardship Standards.

This addendum will be revised as needed.

C Effective and validity dates

Approval date:	12 January 2021
Publication date	09 March 2021
Effective date	After approval
Period of validity	until replaced or withdrawn

PART I Criteria to determine low complexity National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS)

1. Introduction

At the 82nd Board meeting in Germany in November 2019, the Board delegated the authority to make decisions on approvals of INS and lower-complexity NFSS to the Policy Steering Group (PSG).

To implement the decision in regard to NFSS, the Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) has developed criteria in consultation with the Policy and Steering Committee (PSC), the Forest Network Core Group and PSU Regional Managers.

The first version of these criteria, as well as the procedural aspects on how to apply them, were endorsed by the Policy Steering Group at its 8th meeting in August 2020 and included to this document in January 2021.

2. Criteria to determine low complexity NFSS

PSU has established three categories of criteria, which relate to the situation in the country, the content of the standard and other additional aspects.

Category	Criteria
1. Overall situation in the country/region Note: if two or all three of the criteria are met, the NFSS qualifies as low complex according to this category.	1.1 The country has less than 10 million hectares of forest and has less than 1 million hectares of FSC FM certified forest. 1.2 The country has a Corruption Perception Index higher than 50, indicating a low risk of corruption. 1.3 The National Risk Assessment for Controlled Wood category 4 (risk of forest conversion), if available, has resulted in a low risk designation.
2. Content-related aspects of the standard Note: if all three criteria are met, the NFSS qualifies as low complex according to this category.	2.1 There are no Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs) and Indigenous Cultural Landscapes (ICLs) in the country. 2.2 The standard does not drop any indicators and sub-indicators in Principle 2 related to ILO requirements and gender equity, or otherwise addresses them to the satisfaction of PSU. 2.3 The standard does not drop any indicators in Principle 3 or Principle 4 related to Indigenous Peoples or the customary and legal rights of local communities and Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), or otherwise it addresses them to the satisfaction of PSU.
3. Other aspects Note: if the criterion is met, the NFSS qualifies as low	3.1 There are no other significant issues suggesting it should be elevated to the PSC, indicated e.g. by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the assessment of the SDG coordinator as documented in the bi-monthly reports, major disputes, stakeholder discontent and/or major issues either did not exist or are considered sufficiently addressed.

complex according to this category.

- Peer reviewers did not flag any major issues with parts of the standard after it had been reviewed by PSU.
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The decision on a NFSS can be delegated to PSG when the NFSS qualifies as low complex according to the three categories above.

3. Process for determining whether a NFSS is “low complex”

When a final draft of a NFSS is submitted to PSU, the Manager shall assess if the NFSS can be considered “low complex” based on the categories and criteria outlined in the previous section.

If the NFSS qualifies as low complex according to the three categories, it will be delegated to the PSG for approval. Nevertheless, the Chief Policy Officer or the Director Policy Operations may propose that a ‘low complex’ NFSS or a specific part of it is submitted to the Policy and Standard Committee (PSC), if there are major concerns to be brought to the attention of this committee.

Moreover, in situations where the PSG cannot reach a consensus decision on approval or approval with conditions, the PSG may defer the decision-making process to the Policy and Steering Committee (PSC).

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